

### **REMARKS**

In the September 25, 2007 Office Action, claims 21 and 22 were objected to and claims 1-22 stand rejected in view of prior art. Claims 21 and 22 also were rejected as being indefinite. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

### ***Status of Claims and Amendments***

In response to the September 25, 2007 Office Action, Applicants have amended claims 2-5, 7, 8, 10-12, 14-16, 18-22 and canceled claims 1, 9, 13 and 17 as indicated above. Specifically, Applicants have rewritten claims 2, 10, 14 and 19 in independent form and amended claims 3-5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18 and 20-22 in view of the cancellation of claims 1, 9, 13 and 17. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the thorough examination of this application. Thus, claims 2-8, 10-12, 14-16 and 18-22 are pending, with claims 2, 10, 14 and 19 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of above amendments and the following comments.

### ***Claim Objections***

In paragraph 3 of the Office Action, claims 21 and 22 were objected to because of the informalities. In response, Applicants have amended claims 21 and 22 to correct the typographical errors.

Specifically, Applicants have amended claims 21 and 22 to change the term "optimise" to the term "optimize". Applicants believe that the claims are now correct. Withdrawal of the objections is respectfully requested.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §112***

In paragraph 5 of the Office Action, claims 21 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. In response, Applicants have amended claims 21 and 22 to clarify claims 21 and 22.

Specifically, Applicants have amended claims 21 and 22 to change the term "and/or" to the term "and". Applicants believe that the claims now comply with 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

***Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102***

In paragraph 7 of the Office Action, claims 1-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,323,989 to Hamada et al. (hereinafter "Hamada et al. patent"). In response, Applicants have rewritten claims 2, 10, 14 and 19 in independent form and canceled independent claims 1, 9, 13 and 17.

In particular, independent claim 2 recites the *elastic characteristics* of the flexible couplings *being selected to optimize* the *resonant frequency* of the dynamic damper. Independent claim 10 recites the *elastic characteristics* of the flexible couplings *being selected to optimize* the *resonant frequency* of the dynamic damper. Independent claim 14 recites the *elastic characteristics* of the flexible couplings *being selected to optimize* the *resonant frequency* of the vibration system formed of the couplings and the intermediate component. Independent claim 19 recites the *first and second elastic characteristics being selected such that* a *resonant frequency* of the section formed by the upstream flexible coupling, the downstream flexible coupling, and the intermediate component *is lower than 20-30Hz*. Clearly, this structure is *not* disclosed or suggested by the Hamada et al. patent or any other prior art of record.

Specifically, the Hamada et al. patent does *not* disclose that a dynamic damper is formed by virtue of the elastic characteristics (of the flexible joints 20, 22) and the mass (of the catalytic converter 14 and the intermediate section 32). Furthermore, since the Hamada et al. publication does *not* disclose that a dynamic damper is formed by virtue of the elastic characteristics (of the flexible joints 20, 22) and the mass (of the catalytic converter 14 and

the intermediate section 32) as described above, the Hamada et al. publication does *not* disclose that the elastic characteristics of the flexible joints 20, 22 are selected to optimize the resonant frequency of the dynamic damper or such that the resonant frequency is lower than 20-30Hz.

It is well settled under U.S. patent law that for a reference to anticipate a claim, the reference must disclose *each* and *every* element of the claim within the reference. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2, 10, 14 and 19 are not anticipated by the prior art of record. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Moreover, Applicants believe that dependent claims 3-8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18 and 20-22 are also allowable over the prior art of record in that they depend from independent claims 2, 10, 14 and 19, and therefore are allowable for the reasons stated above. Also, dependent claims 3-8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18 and 20-22 are further allowable because they include additional limitations. Thus, Applicants believe that since the prior art of record does not anticipate independent claim 2, 10, 14 and 19, neither does the prior art anticipate dependent claims 3-8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18 and 20-22.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

#### ***Prior Art Citation***

In the Office Action, additional prior art references were made of record. Applicants believe that these references do not render the claimed invention obvious.

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Reply to Office Action of September 25, 2007

***Conclusion***

In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 2-8, 10-12, 14-16 and 18-22 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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